



Short-term mobility (traineeship) in Reunion island

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Agenda



01. Introduction

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wildlife rescue
centre**

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Introduction

- I have done my traineeship, embedded in the curriculum of the 2nd year of Veterinary Medicine studies, in the wildlife rescue centre of the Society of Ornithological Studies of La Reunion – “Société d’Etudes Ornithologiques de La Réunion” (SEOR) to:
 - Deepen my knowledge on the care and management of the avifauna of La Réunion, where biodiversity is of major ecological interest ;
 - Get involved in conservation efforts directly related to wildlife veterinary medicine
- The principal objective of this traineeship was to identify and analyse the morbidity causes of birds deceased during cares in the centre to better understand the factors responsible for the mortality, sometimes unexpected, of the individuals.
- The other objectives of this traineeship were more professional and practice oriented, including:
 - Realisation of coproscopies, to detect the possible presence of internal parasites in birds’ faeces
 - Participation to the daily cares: feeding, treatment administration, contention, hygiene, and monitoring and releasing of collected animals
 - Contribution to the functioning of the centre
 - Formation of new volunteers
 - Taking responsibilities in autonomy by managing alone the centre during the last week
 - Redaction of interesting clinical cases

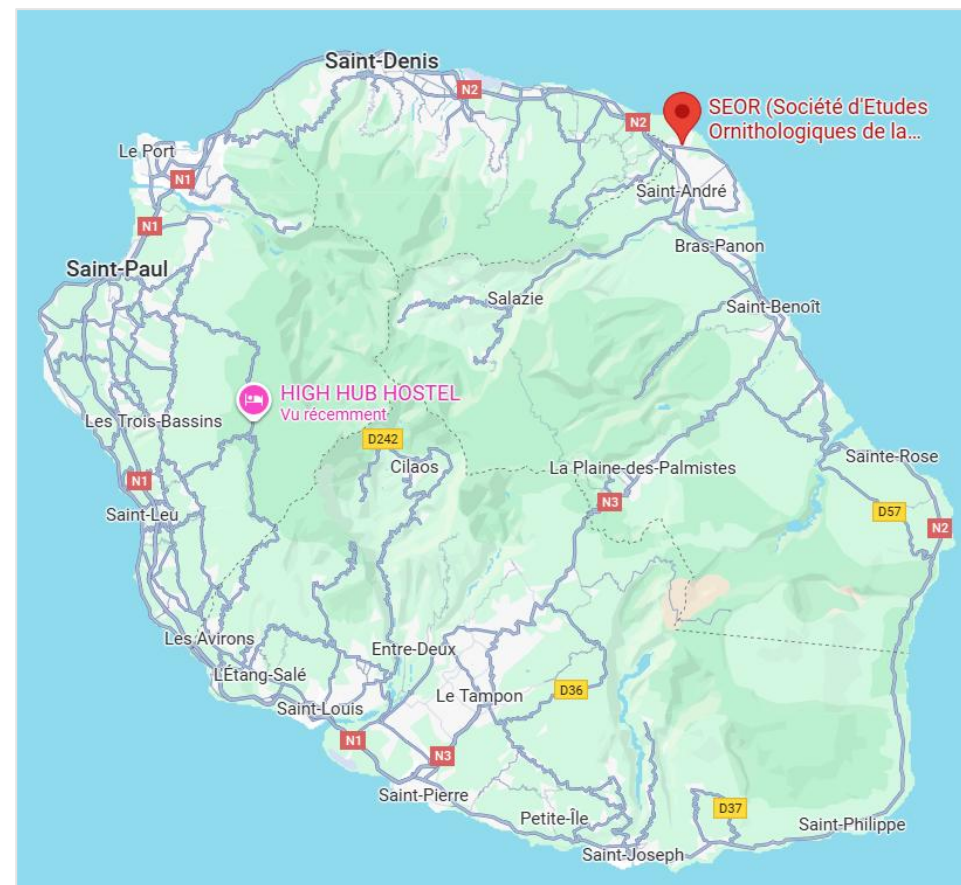
Where is Reunion island located?

- Reunion island is a small French island located in the Indian Ocean in Mascarene Islands, at 679 km at the East of Madagascar and at 172 km at the South-East of Mauritius.
- This is a volcanic island created from a hotspot. Its area is 2,512 km² and its highest point is 3,070m above sea level at the volcano called Piton des neiges.
- It encounters another volcano, the Piton de la Fournaise, located in the South-East of the island, which is one of the most active in the world.
- This is an island with a lot of endemic species of flora and fauna. Unfortunately, most of them are critically endangered due to human activities. Being from this island, it was important for me to take part at my scale in its conservation by training in the “SEOR” organisation.



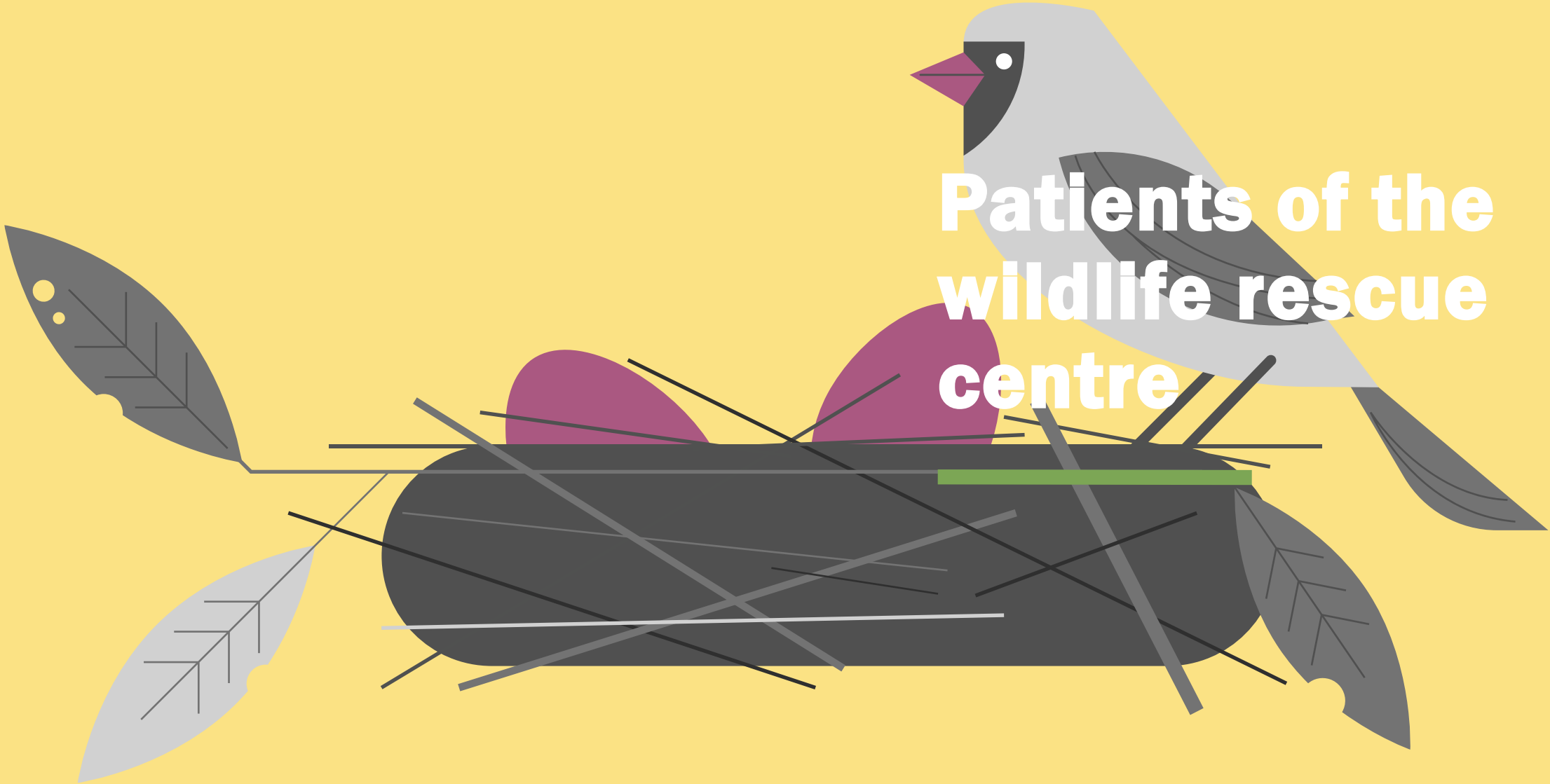
And where is the « SEOR » organisation located?

- The « SEOR » is located in Saint-André, in the North-East of the island.
- Created in 1997, this is a non-profitmaking organisation of nature protection involved in conservation of Reunionese avifauna and its habitats through various missions:
 - Monitoring and scientific study of species (including several endemic and endangered species, such as the Reunion Cuckooshrike *Coracina newtoni* or the Barau's Petrel *Pterodroma baraui*);
 - Raising public awareness and educating them about the preservation of biodiversity;
 - Participation in conservation and restoration programs for natural habitats;
 - Providing care for distressed birds through its rescue center.



Missions of the wildlife rescue centre

- The wildlife rescue centre of the « SEOR » is the only structure of the island habilitated in collecting, caring and rehabilitating wild birds (and some mammals) in difficulty. Here are its complementary missions:
 - Reception and care of injured, weakened birds or birds that have been victims of human activities (collision, light pollution, predation, etc.);
 - Rehabilitation and release of individuals capable of returning to their natural environment;
 - Collecting scientific data to better understand the causes of morbidity and mortality in bird populations;
 - Raising public awareness about cohabitation with wildlife and reducing anthropogenic threats;
- The centre accept only protected species of the island (Reunion Harrier, Tropical Shearwater, Madagascar turtle dove, Barau's Petrel, etc.) in order to focus its ressources on their conservation and to limit the pressure that invasive species already exert on endemic and indigenous species.

An illustration of a grey bird with a black face and a pink beak, perched on a dark grey nest. The nest is constructed from several thin, dark grey sticks and is surrounded by stylized leaves in shades of grey and purple. A small green horizontal bar is visible on the nest. The background is a solid yellow color.

Patients of the wildlife rescue centre

Common patients



Barau's Petrel

Endemic species



Madagascar turtle dove

Indigenous species



Reunion Harrier

Endemic species



Tropical Shearwater

Indigenous species



Red-tailed Tropicbird

Indigenous species



White-tailed tropicbird

Indigenous species



Brown Noddi

Indigenous species



Wedge-tailed Shearwater

Indigenous species

Less common patients



Reunion Petrel

Endemic species



Mascarene Swiftlet

Indigenous species



Reunion Bulbul

Endemic species



Lesser Noddi

Indigenous species



Mascarene Martin

Indigenous species



Subantarctic Skua

Migrator species



Sooty Tern

Indigenous species



Green-backed Heron

Indigenous species

Primary goals

Study of morbidity causes of the birds deceased during cares

Relation between admission cause and death cause

No evidence of any correlation between both causes

Relation between haemorrhage type and species

Tropicbirds: more susceptible to brain haemorrhage

Tropical shearwaters: no predominance of any haemorrhage type

Prevalence of death causes

60% – Haemorrhages (brain and air sacs)

30% – Human mistakes (Aspiration 20% and Heat stroke 10%)

10% - Intrinsic problems (e.g. anemia)

Conclusion

Haemorrhage: major death cause observed

In case of haemorrhage, as much from brain haemorrhage as air sacs haemorrhage for tropical shearwaters and exclusively from brain haemorrhage for tropicbirds

No correlation evidenced between death and admission cause

Realisation of coproscopies

Madagascar turtle doves, chicks

- Found on the ground after tree lopping. Nothing found during clinical examination but too young to eat alone so manual feeding with Nutribird® (insectivore mixture) several times a day.
- Slow weight gain and orange and diarrheic feces after a few days.
- Coproscopy: positive to long transparent worms (+ 1 red worm)
- No treatment because too young (less than 100g) but yes if persisting symptoms and weight above 100g

Tropicbird, chick

- Predated by a cat. No wounds found on his body during clinical examination (doesn't mean no wounds as cats do small punctiform wounds), but too young for antibiotics therapy so syringe feeding (mixed fishes, instead of whole fishes) several times a day to facilitate the organism to combat the possible occurring infection
- Several mucous feces after a few days
- Coproscopy: positive to large and long transparent worms
- No treatment because too young and too unpredictable symptoms

Clinical cases

Madagascar turtle dove, juvenile

- **Admission cause:** collision (window), then fallen into the swimming pool and then predated by a dog
- **Clinical examination:** wounds including a purulent and deep one (knee joint)
- **Treatment:** antibiotics and painkiller therapy, with cleaning, disinfection and antibacterial creme application to the wounds

Madagascar turtle dove, juvenile

- **Admission cause:** fallen from the nest
- **Clinical examination:** exudative and foul-smelling swelling in the area of the crop, with necrotic skin in some parts
- **Diagnosis and treatment:** Crop fistula treated surgically, antibiotics therapy and disinfection of the suture

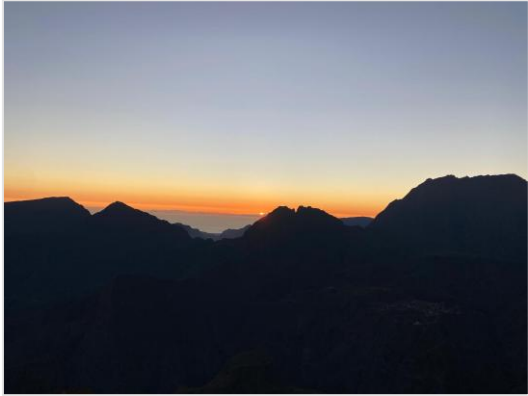
Tropicbird, juvenile

- **Admission cause:** possible disease
- **Clinical examination:** tissue-formed swelling in front of the cranium, above the nares, with a large necrotic area and symmetrical necrotic swellings at the external angle of the eyes
- **Diagnosis and treatment:** possible pox virus (badly described in seabirds), so antibiotics and pain killer therapy with cleaning of the necrosis

Secondary goal

Visiting and discovering La Réunion

Sunrise at Le Maïdo



Piton Maïdo, Saint-Paul

Hiking

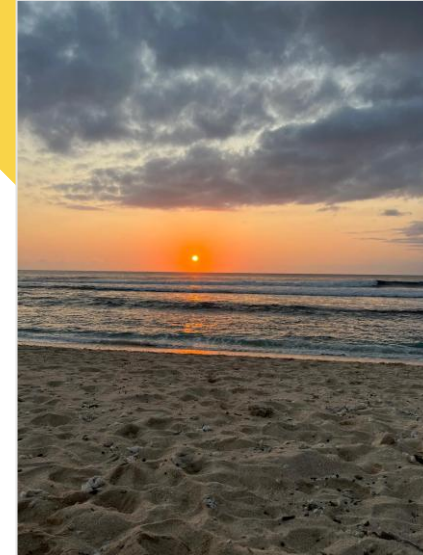


Bassin Bœuf, Sainte-Suzanne

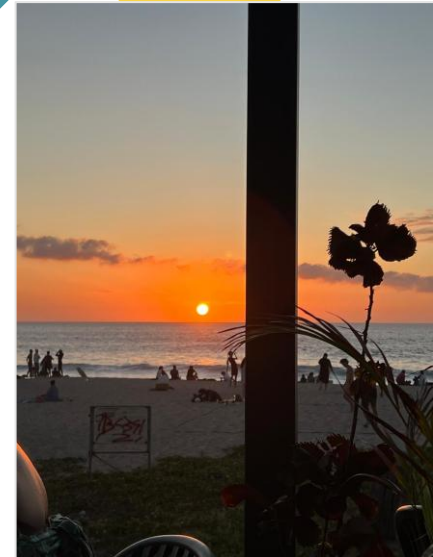


Trois Bassins

Sunsets on the beach



Les Brisants beach, Saint-Gilles-Les-Bains



Boucan Canot beach, Saint-Paul



Summary

- This mobility has been a great opportunity to deepen my knowledge and skills in tropical wildlife medicine, as well as in birds' necropsies, rediscovering at the same time the wonderful island I come from.
- It gave me insurance in my practice and has been very rewarding for my future experiences and my future job, as a vet.
- If you are interested in helping injured wild animals to go back to their natural environment – and most importantly you are interested in conservation programs, then I hardly recommend this place!