



La lettre de la Société d'Ornithologie de Polynésie 'Manu'

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The '**Ōmāma'o** or **Tahiti Monarch** is one of the most threatened birds of the planet. At the start of the conservation program, in 1998, only 12 adults were known in the entire world. Present only in Tahiti, this bird has to face ten invasive species, all ranked among the 100 most invasive species on the planet, which includes Black rat, Indian Myna, Red-Vented Bulbul, etc. Later, the Little Fire Ant (LFA) was found on a surface of 70 ha near the entrance of the Tahiti Monarch habitat, located in three valleys (Hopa, Maruapo and Papehue).



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The Monarchs population has increased and the translocation of juveniles is planned!

At least 125 adults and 55 pairs were monitored during the first half of the 2021-2022 breeding season.

A number of 16 pairs have produced 17 fledgling, from which 16 survived. Nine nests are still active. The population has increased by 19% in one year. In order to reinforce the small sub-population of Hopa Valley, which has a high level of consanguinity, a translocation operational plan has been prepared in 2021, with the help of ten international experts. In order to avoid Monarchs flying back to the valley (adults are strongly territorial), several juveniles will be moved at the same time, when they start to become independent from their parents. Their new home in Hopa Valley has been prepared (new tracks, rodent control...) and the translocation is starting very soon!

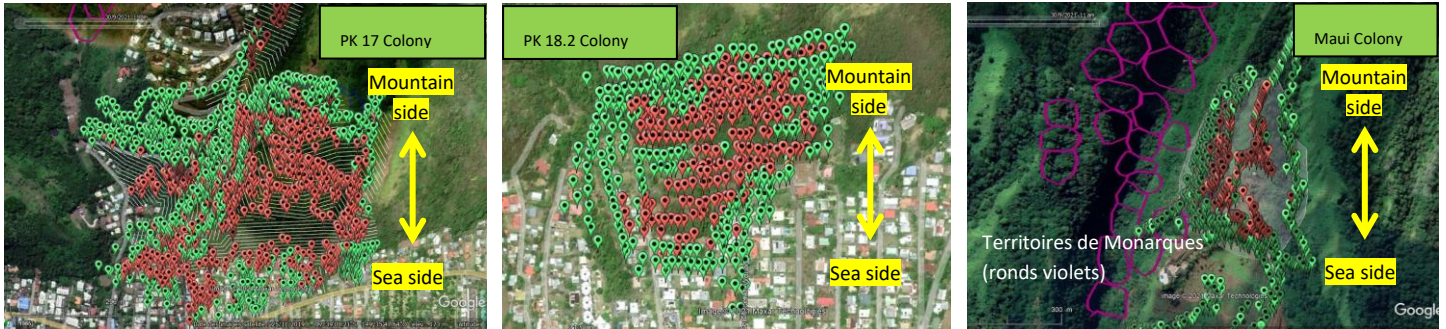


Monitoring and Manipulation training (on a Crimson-backed Tanager; careful of the beak!)

LFA eradication in Te Maru Ata cliff has been confirmed, three years after the drone applications. Three other mega-colonies that invaded a surface of almost 54 hectares have been treated by drone in 2021!

In addition to the 200 private gardens where LFA has been removed, SOP has treated the PK 17 and PK 18 colonies in its entirety. SOP Manu also managed to rapidly remove a new colony discovered in 2021, and located near the Monarch's territories (< 150 meters)!

A colossal work, which SOP and Matarai Society are pioneering here, that could help others islands to fight LFA. 18 warning signs and 1400 fridge-magnets have been distributed to prevent land recontamination.



Ex- PK 17 and PK 18.2 colonies, and ex- Maui Colony, discovered in 2021 near Monarch's territories (red spots = positive to LFA, green spots = negatives)



Drone application performed by Matarai Society – many thanks to them – the end of a nightmare for us?

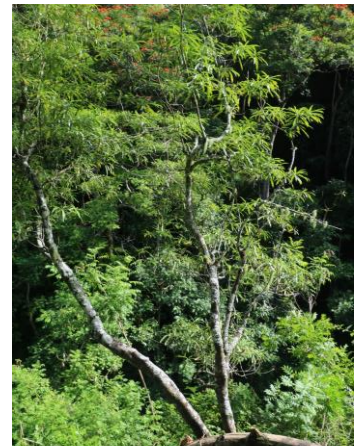
Monarch's habitat restauration now include the recovery of four very threatened plant species

Despite Covid, volunteers have devoted 230 days on habitat restoration, from invasive plant removal to plantation. A number of 161 plants have been planted, including 59 classified as CR or EN (under DIREN supervision)

51 households have caught Red-vented Bulbul and Common Myna in their garden

More than 800 mynas and 1900 bulbuls were trapped in 2021, saving young Tahiti monarchs from those very aggressive introduced birds.

SOP would like to acknowledge all those volunteers and the sponsors of this program (see below), including 10 godfathers or godmothers that stayed anonymous.



One of the only 30 Ochrosia tahitensis mature trees identified, protected within Monarch's valleys

All together, we are saving the 'Ōmāma'o!



By the staff : Caroline Blanvillain, Thomas Ghestemme, Laurent Yan, Teiva Maraetefau, Jean-François Butaud, Ben Ignace, Maria Igual and all the SOP volunteers.

To join SOP Manu or became a Monarch's godfather: www.manu.pf ou sop@manu.pf.
Our presentation video is available here: <https://youtu.be/luejhzPryNU>