Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Jean Marry Exantus
Project Title	Population biology of a Hispaniola-endemic bird species, the La Selle Thrush (*Turdus swalesi*): applications to the management and conservation of the species
Application ID	36175
Date of this Report	29 September 2022

1. Indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Updating the conservation status of the Hispaniola-endemic and "vulnerable" La Selle Trush, Turdus swalesi, based on a capture-mark-recapture study and collection of biological samples for genetic analyses				Medical complications: I had to stop field missions after experiencing severe medical problems (partial to complete paralysis of upper and lower members) that prevented me from working both in the field and in the laboratory for more than 6 months.
Allowing the determination of levels of inbreeding and gene flow between the two populations (Haiti and Dominican Republic)				
Obtained results on population size, adult sex ratio, adult survival rate, habitat selection, movements and home range, management recommendations will be provided for the conservation of the species.				

2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

a). During the field work 34 species of birds were observed. Among them 14 were captured with mist nets, amounting to 110 individuals. Among the 14 species captured with mist nets, six were endemics, the Hispaniolan emerald (*Chlorostilbon swainsonii*), the La Selle trush (*Turdus swalesi*), the Hispaniolan pewee (*Contopus hispaniolensis*), the western chat-tanager (*Calyptophilus tertius*), the green-tailed warbler (*Microligea palustris*), and the Hispaniolan spindalis (*Spindalis dominicensis*).

b). A total of six individuals of the target species, the La Selle trush (*Turdus swalesi*), were captured. Three of them were new individuals, captured for the first time during the mission and the other three were recaptures by mist nets. Until now we have 79 banded birds for the target species.

c). Eight camera-traps were set to complete our monitoring with pictures and videos.

The most important result for that particular field mission is the regular observation and captures of unbanded birds, what is important for the estimation of total population size.

3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

During the beginning of the project, I became sick, been most probably infected by the Zika virus. I then suffered from a complication known as "Guillain-Barré syndrome" that comes with severe neurological problems. I was very weak in my upper and lower limbs and my hands and feet were completely paralysed. I had to go see a physiotherapist and a neurologist for rehabilitation plans of the upper and lower limbs.

4. Describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project.

Two field guides, both native and resident in the study area, one of whom supervised the camp with the materials during the day and helped with certain pressing needs (purchase, transportation of baggage in the field) and the other who circulated with us in the field as a local person and slept in the camp with us as a precautionary measure because he knows the area and local people well. In addition to the two paid field guides, other locals were able to learn some techniques and were able to identify certain bird species in hand while observing our field work and be informed of the importance of the birds and other animal species.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, because the study area, the massif of the Selle in which the National Park La Visite is located, constitutes one of the areas of importance for the conservation of several species of birds classified as threatened on the red list of IUCN. These include endemic birds, such as the western chat-tanager, *Calyptophilus tertius* (VU), sedentary breeding birds such as the golden swallow, *Tachycineta euchcrysa* (VU), the black-capped petrel, *Pterodroma hasitata* (EN), which breeds in the cavities (hole rocks) of remote cliffs in the study area and migratory birds, such as the Bicknell's thrush, *Catharus bicknelli* (VU). Several individuals of some of these species have already been captured with mist-nets (western chat-tanager, the golden swallow) during the course of our study. The area is also of importance for the presence of two mammal species of high patrimonial value, the Haitian solenodon, *Solenodon paradoxus*, and the Cuvier's hutia, *Plagiodontia aedium*. Both species are rare and in danger of extinction.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

We will submit publications based on results obtained during study project to international, peer-reviewed journals in ornithology and/or conservation. We will also write articles in non-scientific journals to raise awareness in the lay audience.

7. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

After full recovery and the oral defence of my doctoral thesis in 2023, I would like to reapply for a grant to continue working on biological conservation in Haiti to become a Rufford project partner in the future.

8. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the Foundation receive any publicity during the course of your work?

I not yet used the Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project. But the Rufford receives any verbally publicity during my work in my links. I will use the name of Rufford in the final report of this project.

9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.

Two supervisors
Prof. Frank Cézilly (University of Burgundy, France), has expertise in the field of bird population biology (with several articles on turdidae and on endemic bird species of the West Indies).

Dr. Etienne Bezault (Lecturer, University of the French West Indies), has expertise in population genetics and will provide access to facilities for molecular work in his lab

The field team was composed of 5 people
Jean Marry Exantus, coordinated the mission (setting up the nets, ringing the birds, taking biometric measurements, taking blood, saliva and feathers, etc.).

Aubourg Wilson and **Pharlain Davance** the two field assistants who helped in the installation (opening and closing) of the mist nets, removing the birds, taking notes for biometric measurements and biological samples for genetics, setting up the photographic traps, and so on.

Two field guides, both native and resident in the study area.
Noula Auguste, supervised the camp with the materials during the day and helped with certain pressing needs (purchase, transportation of baggage in the field).

Lionel Raymond circulated with us in the field as a local person and slept in the camp with us as a precautionary measure because he knows the area and the people well.

10. Any other comments?

I had an extension from the Doctoral School to be able to present my thesis in the second quarter of the year 2023, following my medical complications. I had however some problems to obtain the required visa because the French embassy was overloaded over the last months. Problems have now been solved and I will return to Guadeloupe before the end of this year to write and do laboratory analyses to finalize my thesis. Rufford will be informed of any progress made.