
World's first successful national eradication of ring-necked parakeets *Psittacula krameri*

Jennifer Appoo*^{†1}, Julio Agricole¹, Jessica Moumou¹, Frauke Fleischer-Dogley¹, and Nancy Bunbury¹

¹Seychelles Islands Foundation (SIF) – La Ciotat Building, Mont Fleuri, PO Box 853, Victoria, Seychelles

Abstract

There have been relatively few successful eradications of invasive alien birds compared to eradications of invasive mammals. The ring-necked parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) is the most widely introduced parrot species on the planet, having been introduced to more than 40 countries across five continents. Control and management of the species is common but, until this year, the species had not been eradicated from any of them. In the Seychelles, ring-necked parakeets were introduced as pets from the 1970s and accidentally released birds established a small breeding population on the main island of Mahé by the late 1990s. The rapidly expanding parakeet population caused increasing damage to agricultural crops and, as a high-risk reservoir host and vector for pathogens, including beak and feather disease virus (BFDV), the population posed a major threat to the endemic Seychelles black parrot (*Coracopsis barklyi*), which occurs only on the nearby island of Praslin. An eradication programme to remove ring-necked parakeets from Seychelles started in 2012 by the Seychelles Islands Foundation. We present the eradication methods tested and applied and the results of the control efforts in the three main phases of the programme; (1) monitoring of numbers and methods trials; (2) intensive elimination of ring-necked parakeets; and (3) post-eradication monitoring for verification of success. We also present the techniques of the nation-wide public information campaign which was a fundamental component of the eradication in all phases. A total of 548 birds were culled over 5 years, 95% with shooting and 5% with mist-netting. The most effective way to reach the general public was by the eradication team members going out and talking directly to people. The eradication was declared successful in early 2019, making Seychelles the first country in the world to officially eradicate an established population of ring-necked parakeets from the wild. Lessons learned from this eradication will prove valuable for eradication attempts elsewhere and this success should encourage such attempts, especially on islands.

Keywords: invasive alien bird, island, parrot, successful eradication, Seychelles

*Speaker

[†]Corresponding author: spc@sif.sc