

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	Fiji Nature Conservation Trust
Project Title:	Building community support to search for the Red-throated Lorikeet in Fiji
Date of Report:	31 st July 2012
Report Author and Contact Information	Dick Watling

CEPF Region: Polynesia-Micronesia Hotspot

Strategic Direction: 3. Build awareness and participation of local leaders and community members in the implementation of protection and recovery plans for threatened species.

Grant Amount: \$ 19,173

Project Dates: 1 Nov 2010 – 30 Jun 2012

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):

Department of Environment – overview – receives copies of all reports prepared and updates and NBSAP meetings;

Ba Provincial Authorities – overview – receives reports and updates for local district meetings;

Tomaniivi Nature Club – the Site Support Group for the Tomaniivi IBA/KBA – co-implementer of the project;

BirdLife International Fiji Programme and Conservation International – provision of advice when needed.

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

The project has provided the longest series of searches for the Critically Endangered Red-throated Lorikeet, ever undertaken. In recent times (since 1965) this small lorikeet has only been recorded with certainty from the Tomaniivi IBA/KBA and adjacent forests and is one of the key species contributing to the designation of the Tomaniivi IBA/KBA. As such the work done has been a major contribution to our knowledge of the importance of the site, specifically for its role in the conservation of the Red-throated Lorikeet.

That the project's searches have failed to confirm the continued existence of the Red-throated Lorikeet gives rise to the greatest concern. The last confirmed sighting of the Red-throated Lorikeet was in 1993, although there have been several unconfirmed sightings since that time, the current project's work added to the several other unsuccessful searches for the Lorikeet in the past decade, means that we now have to acknowledge that Red-throated Lorikeet may well have been extirpated from Viti Levu. We have not done enough survey work on Taveuni where there remains significant undisturbed forest to reach a similar conclusion from there.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project against the expected results detailed in the approved proposal.

1. A professional forest survey programme set up specifically for the Red-throated Lorikeet, and implemented.
2. No confirmed or unconfirmed sighting of the Red-throated Lorikeet – we need to acknowledge now that Red-throated Lorikeet is probably extirpated on Viti Levu;
3. Training for community members in bird observation and monitoring. Not very successful, however, two members of the Tomaniivi Nature Club trained and competent in searching for the Red-throated Lorikeet. One of whom, a lady became a proficient bird observer and very interested. However, it was not possible to train a cadre of youth in bird observation such that they could meaningfully regularly monitor transects and sites for the Red-throated Lorikeet. This was because of a variety of factors including logistics (sites were not close enough to the villages to be easily accessed at the right time of day); difficulties in teaching untrained birders to accurately identify birds that they have no experience of; difficulties in maintaining interest in the absence of the trainer and/or incentives.
4. The potential for an ecotourism initiative, specifically bird guiding at Tomaniivi centered around one community member who did become a proficient bird observer and was keen to initiate a bird guiding programme for tourists, was evaluated on site by an overseas specialist;
5. Activities that raised the awareness of the Tomaniivi Nature Club as well as community members and local schools about the Red-throated Lorikeet. This included a visit and workshop by the Kulawai – the National Women’s volleyball team as part of a National HIV Awareness Programme.
6. Very successful function held at the Fiji Museum in the name of the Red-throated Lorikeet where models of Fiji’s endangered species made from recycled materials were exhibited and then auctioned with good publicity. An exhibition on display at Fiji Museum for nearly three months.
7. A detailed Species Recovery Plan prepared.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: n/a
Species Conserved: n/a
Corridors Created: n/a

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.

The project has provided a highly significant contribution in respect of our knowledge of the Red-throated Lorikeet – one of the IBA/KBAs most important species. Unfortunately, the result was a negative one – there is no evidence of its continued existence, which in itself is still highly significant, such that we need now to acknowledge that the Red-throated Lorikeet may well be extinct.

The bulk of the survey work was undertaken by highly experienced bird observers, rather than community members, as such there is little doubt about the overall outcome – no confirmed or unconfirmed observations.

In retrospect, it was probably unrealistic to believe that one could train community youth to a level where they could independently undertake surveys for species such as the Red-throated Lorikeet which is both extremely rare (perceived situation at the beginning of the project) as well as being extremely difficult to detect (retiring, crepuscular nature of the bird). Nonetheless the awareness raised during the project was excellent and there

is at least one lady with the ability, interest and energy to undertake bird guiding for tourists.

The project was able to leverage a visit and report by two experienced overseas persons on the ecotourism potential of the area and the Tomaniivi Nature Club.

A very successful function was held at the Fiji Museum in the name of the Red-throated Lorikeet where models of Fiji's endangered species made from recycled materials were exhibited and then auctioned with good publicity. An exhibition on the Red-throated Lorikeet and other endangered species was on display at Fiji Museum for nearly three months.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

It was unexpected and very concerning that we would not observe the Red-throated Lorikeet during the project.

The following reports were prepared during the project:

Herman, K. J. 2011. *Red-throated Lorikeet "Kulawai" Chamosyna amabilis Monasavu-Tomanivi, Viti Levu. Report from January – March 2011 survey.* Unpublished NatureFiji – MareqetiViti Report # MV18: 2011/06, Suva.

Macedru, K. 2012. *Promoting Awareness of the Kulawai, Red-throated Lorikeet Chamosyna amabilis. An Exhibition of Models and Masi Paintings of Endangered Fijian Fauna at the Fiji Museum and their Auction for the Project.* Unpublished NatureFiji – MareqetiViti Report # MV18: 2012/11, Suva.

Masibalavu, V. 2011. *Reports of surveys of the Red-throated Lorikeet, Kulawai Chamosyna amabilis with the Tomaniivi Nature Club, Nadala, Ba, Vti Levu.* Unpublished NatureFiji – MareqetiViti Report # MV18: 2011/12, Suva.

Steven, Rochelle 2012. *An investigative study into whether the Nadala/Vatumoli area could support nature-based tourism; and, a survey for the Critically Endangered Red-throated Lorikeet (Chamosyna amabilis).* Unpublished report prepared for NatureFiji-MareqetiViti, Griffith School of Environment and International Centre for Ecotourism Research, Griffith University, Queensland, Australia

Watling, Dick 2011. *Report on the Birds with Particular Reference to Threatened Species of the Wainavadu-Waisoi Catchments, Namosi, Viti Levu, Fiji.* Unpublished NatureFiji-MareqetiViti Report # MV18: 2011/11, Suva

Watling, Dick 2012. *Kulawai Red-throated Lorikeet Chamosyna amabilis Species Recovery Plan 2013-2017.* Unpublished NatureFiji-MareqetiViti Report # MV18: 2012/20, Suva

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

1. The primary objective of the project – to provide up to date information on the Red-throated Lorikeet was realized, although in the end the bulk of the work was undertaken by highly experienced bird observers rather than trained community members.

- In retrospect, it was probably unrealistic to believe that with the resources the project could offer, one could train community youth to a level where they could independently undertake surveys for species such as the Red-throated Lorikeet which is both extremely rare (perceived situation at the beginning of the project) as well as being extremely difficult to detect (retiring, crepuscular nature of the bird).

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

Centering the project on the Tomaniivi Nature Club Site Support Group enabled the small grant resources to be applied immediately to activities with known individuals/communities. This dispensed with the necessary preliminaries of entry into and getting to know a new community(s) and their environment. Despite this we underestimated the logistical requirements (time and cost) of getting community members into the right location to undertake meaningful surveys for the Red-throated Lorikeet.

On the other-hand the project was flexible enough to switch the survey component to surveys being done by highly experienced bird observers, such that they were professionally implemented.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

The project was flexible enough to switch the survey component to surveys originally planned for community members, being done by highly experienced bird observers, such that they were professionally implemented. This was especially important in that the initial surveys with the community members did not reveal any Red-throated Lorikeets indicating that a broader survey effort was required.

Overall the number and location of surveys combined with the experience of the observers provided a high level of confidence in the 'negative' result.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

Although an attractive idea to both the community and the umbrella organisation, expecting untrained community members to become trained to make useful scientific observations of an extremely rare and difficult to detect bird, was probably unrealistic. This might be considered specific to the situation at Tomaniivi, the nature of the bird and the resources available from a small grant, but it also likely to be true in many similar situations when the competence of communities to be trained to undertake scientific observations is overestimated.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
Dr Kerry Herman	A	\$18,000	Six weeks as volunteer community trainer and expert search coordinator
Environment Consultants Fiji	A	\$9,500	15 Red-throated Lorikeet search days by Dick Watling with associated costs
Clare Morrison, Rochelle Steven, Griffith	A	\$7,000	One week survey work and evaluation of ecotourism potential

University			report
Anne O'Brien of Anniemals	B	\$3,000	20 models of endangered Fijian animals made from recycled materials and 15 paintings auctioned for Red-throated Lorikeet project

****Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:***

- A** *Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)*
- B** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)*
- C** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.

Further work on the Red-throated Lorikeet will not seek to replicate the community involvement envisaged by this project. It will rely entirely on expert input until such time as a site is located where the species can be regularly observed. NatureFiji-MareqetiViti intends to follow up on the ecotourism-bird guiding potential with the community members trained during the project.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

None

Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

None required

Additional Comments/Recommendations

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

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