

The CONNECT Projet

Birds without borders or isolated islands ?

Connectivity of seabirds in the western Indian Ocean



**Program of the final symposium
28 – 30 April 2026**

Venue : Amphitheatre Commerson, Faculté des Sciences et Technologie, Campus du Moufia, Université de La Réunion

Bertarelli Foundation
Bertarelli program in Marine Science

Day one : 28 April 2026

08:00	Arrival and registration
08:30	Introduction to the symposium

Session one: The CONNECT project: general overview and individual connectivity
Chairman : Gaspard Baudrin

09:00	Matthieu Le Corre (UMR ENTROPIE). <i>Overview of seabirds in the western Indian Ocean and knowledge gaps to inform conservation</i>
09:20	Malcolm Nicoll (Zoological Society of London) and Steve Votier (Heriot Watt University). <i>Overview of the CONNECT project and objectives</i>
09:40	Alice Trevail (University of Exeter). <i>Prospecting and foraging by immature red-footed boobies</i>
10:00	coffee / tea break
10:40	Robin Freeman (Zoological Society of London). <i>Predicting future wedge-tailed shearwater foraging habitats</i>
11:00	Ruth Dunn (Heriot-Watt University now at CEFE, CNRS) <i>Predicting future wedge-tailed shearwater foraging habitats: from paper to toolkit</i>
11:20	Alice Trevail (University of Exeter). <i>Predicting future wedge-tailed shearwater foraging habitats: discussion</i>
12:00	Lunch at the university

Session two: The CONNECT project: genetic connectivity and implications for conservation
Chairwoman : Audrey Jaeger

13:40	Laurence Humeau (UMR ENTROPIE). <i>Introduction to the seabird genetic session</i>
14:00	Helena Teixeira (UMR Entropie, now at ISEM, Univ Montpellier, CNRS, IRD, Montpellier, France). <i>Population genetic structure and conservation insights in two endemic petrels of Réunion Island</i>
14:20	Helena Teixeira (UMR Entropie, now at ISEM, Univ Montpellier, CNRS, IRD, Montpellier, France). <i>Oceanographic drivers of genetic differentiation in the Tropical shearwater</i>
14:40	Gaspard Baudrin (UMR ENTROPIE). <i>Genetic and ecological evidence of dispersal across Indian Ocean wedge-tailed shearwater (<i>Ardenna pacifica</i>) colonies</i>
15:00	Gaspard Baudrin (UMR ENTROPIE). <i>Study of gene-flow in red-footed boobies (<i>Sula sula</i>), do differences in plumage morph frequencies reflect populations isolation or local selective pressures?</i>
15:20	Matthieu Le Corre (UMR ENTROPIE). <i>Seabird connectivity and consequences for conservation</i>
15:40	coffee / tea break
16:20	Discussion and day one wrap up
19 :30	Team dinner at KT-Dral, Saint Denis (CONNECT project team + international attendees)

Day two : 29 April 2026

Session three : Seabirds research and conservation in the western Indian Ocean - population size, trends and threats

Chairwomen : Florinah Razafimandimby & Dorothée Neff

08:30	Etienne Bemanaja (CNRO) ; Rivo Rabarisoa (ASITY Madagascar) ; Anasvaler Mbelomanana (Université d'Antsiranana) and Laurier Raymond Randria (IH.SM). <i>Seabirds of Madagascar: State of the colonies and conservation issues</i>
08:40	Nik Cole (Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust / Mauritian Wildlife Foundation). <i>The status of seabirds in St Brandon.</i>
09:10	Pouvalen Seeneevassin (Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust). <i>Seabird recovery on Round Island.</i>
09:30	Steve Votier (Heriot Watt University). <i>Status and distribution of seabirds in Chagos archipelago.</i>
09:50	Berenger Laurent (TAAF). <i>Monitoring and conservation of seabirds in the Eparses islands : a close collaboration between managers and researcher</i>
10:10	coffee / tea break
10 :50	Thalissa Inch (Institute of Zoology and University College London). <i>Understanding the key drivers of sooty tern decline in Seychelles : the impact of egg harvesting</i>
11:10	Jennifer Appoo (University of Seychelles). <i>The role of seabirds in nutrient cycling on tropical oceanic islands</i>
11:30	Léo Chevillon (SEOR). <i>Petrels and artificial lights: assessing and reducing light pollution impact on Réunion seabirds</i>
11:50	Noah Dine (SIF). <i>Status and distribution of seabirds of Aldabra Atoll : research and conservation</i>
12:10	Lunch at the university

Session four : Seabirds research and conservation in the western Indian Ocean - migration and foraging behaviours

Chairwoman : Jennifer Appoo

13:30	Alice Trevail (University of Exeter). <i>Tracking seabird migration across the tropical Indian Ocean</i>
13:50	Margot Thibault (UMR ENTROPIE and The Ocean Cleanup). <i>Barau's petrel, Pterodroma barau, as a bioindicator of plastic pollution in the South-West Indian Ocean: A multifaceted approach</i>
14:10	Dorothée Neff (UMR ENTROPIE). <i>Synchronous tracking of four tropical seabird species: differences in foraging strategy</i>
14:30	Gérard Rocamora (Island Biodiversity Conservation centre, University of Seychelles & Island Conservation Society). <i>First results from challenging tracking events outside of their breeding grounds: Red-footed-boobies and Greater frigatebirds on St François atoll, Alphonse group, Seychelles.</i>
14:50	Ruth Dunn (Heriot-Watt University now at CEFE, CNRS). <i>Red-footed boobies commute in crosswinds and forage in fast winds</i>
15:10	Malcolm Nicoll (Zoological Society of London). <i>Marine Spatial Planning and seabirds: Red-footed boobies at Farquhar Atoll</i>
15:30	Hannah Wood (Lyell Centre, Heriot-Watt University). <i>Tracking at-sea movement of terns in the Chagos Archipelago.</i>
15:50	coffee / tea break
16:20	Open discussion, recommendations and concluding remarks
19:30	Symposium Dinner at La Comédie, Saint Denis (https://www.lacomédie.re/). Invited participants (registration required)

Day three : 30 April 2026

Field visit (CONNECT project team + international attendees)

All day : field visit to seashore of Grande Anse, Petite Ile + the (very) active volcano of Piton de La Fournaise and the humid native forest of Mare Longue, Saint Philippe

Departure from Saint Denis (hotel Tulipp Inn) at 7h00 AM

Return to Saint Denis at 18h00

Bus transportation

A great thank to all our partners and collaborators :

