

Predation of the Réunion Island day gecko *Phelsuma borbonica* by the Réunion stonechat *Saxicola tectes*: what roles do kiosks play?

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The Réunion Island day gecko, *Phelsuma borbonica*, is endemic to Réunion Island (Austin et al., 2004) and considered Endangered (Sanchez, 2021). Although commonly preyed on by introduced species (Sanchez & Caceres, 2019; Sanchez & Gérard, 2017), other predators include only the endemic Réunion harrier, *Circus maillardi* (Ferret & Sanchez, 2021), and, with this observation, potentially the endemic Réunion stonechat (*Saxicola tectes*), which shares similar habitats (Urquhart, 2002; Sanchez & Probst, 2017a). Although usually insectivorous (Cummins & O'Halloran, 2002), *S. tectes* has been reported to prey on the Indo-Pacific tree gecko, *Hemiphyllodactylus typus* (Deso et al., 2007).

On 27 January 2026, at 11:00 h, an adult female *S. tectes* was observed at the viewpoint of the Eden-Liberia Forest perched on a damaged kiosk (21° 01'35" S, 55° 37'37" E; 670 m a.s.l.) looking for prey on the ground. The bird descended to the grass and returned to the kiosk with a juvenile *P. borbonica* in its beak (Fig. 1), recognizable by its dark, speckled back.

Installing and maintaining anthropogenic structures (i.e., kiosks with mowing and tree trimming) in forests creates vegetation gaps. This allows sunlight to penetrate, creating an edge effect that favours reptiles (Cogollo & Urbina-Cardona, 2015; Sanchez & Probst, 2017b), while also providing *S. tectes* with open areas for hunting (Urquhart, 2002). However, while adult geckos are too large to be preyed upon, this environment could expose juveniles. As such, further observations exploring interactions among predators (e.g., *S. tectes* or other bird species), kiosks, and juvenile *P. borbonica* are needed to determine whether open kiosk areas are a net advantage or disadvantage and to inform appropriate conservation recommendations for protecting this endangered species.

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Figure 1. Adult female *Saxicola tectes*, predating a juvenile of *Phelsuma borbonica* on Réunion Island in a clearing created to accommodate a kiosk