

Loxahatchee Non-profit Sends Mobile Wildlife Laboratory to Island of Dominica

Through a cooperative grant with The Batchelor Foundation in Miami and the White Oak Conservation Center in Yulee, FL, the Rare Species Conservatory Foundation (RSCF) in Loxahatchee has sent a mobile wildlife conservation laboratory to the Caribbean island of Dominica. The 25' RV, purchased through a special grant and shipped with special consideration by Tropical Shipping in Riviera Beach, has been outfitted for Dominica's Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division. The Division, the natural resources branch of Dominica's government, has been partnered with RSCF for the past 15 years to conserve Dominica's unique wildlife, especially its endangered, endemic parrots, the Imperial and Red-necked Amazon parrots. The RV is equipped with incubators, field gear, veterinary supplies, and wildlife monitoring and surveillance equipment, and can support six researchers in the field for extended stays. When not engaged by the parrot conservation program, the mobile lab will be used to support the Forestry Division's many environmental and educational programs, which are distributed across Dominica's rugged terrain. Dominica is renowned as the Nature Island of the Caribbean for its lush oceanic rainforests which cover 75% of the island, 365 rivers, 200 waterfalls, and rich biodiversity. More than a third of the volcanic island is protected by national parks and reserves.



Dr. Reillo with the mobile wildlife laboratory at RSCF's headquarters in Loxahatchee, FL

To RSCF and Forestry staff, this latest development is a natural extension of the joint conservation effort. “The partnership has yielded tremendous benefits to wildlife and people by increasing local capacity for research and conservation, and inspiring pride in native wildlife. Dominica is leading the region in biodiversity protection and environmental education—we’re just doing what we can to help,” says RSCF Director Dr. Paul Reillo. “We’re particularly indebted to local contributors and to Tropical Shipping, who went above and beyond our expectations. We never could have delivered this specialized vehicle without their generosity and expertise. Tropical knows the Caribbean better than any local company, and understands and appreciates our mission to preserve Dominica’s natural treasures.”



Tropical Shipping and Forestry Division staff with the mobile laboratory on Dominica

Over the years, the program has achieved significant conservation milestones, including creating the world’s first national park of the new millennium, the Morne Diablotin National Park (Jan. 2000), to protect the stronghold for Dominica’s national bird, the Imperial Amazon Parrot. Through field research, protected-areas legislation, environmental awareness and public outreach, the program has helped the Imperial recover to its historical range and population size—the highest in over 50 years. The Imperial nearly became extinct following Hurricane David in 1979, which devastated Dominica. The national bird is revered as the icon of Dominica, adorning the nation’s flag and coat-of-arms. Please see www.rarespecies.org for more about Dominica and the parrot conservation effort.



Mobile wildlife laboratory at Dominica's Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division Headquarters, Roseau, Dominica.

For more information, please contact:

Paul R. Reillo, Ph.D., Director
Rare Species Conservatory Foundation
(561) 790-5864
paulreillo@rarespecies.org