

Perseverance

Culling of crows being considered

by T. Dennis

Concerns have been mounting among residents of Perseverance District regarding the surge in crow sightings. Mr. Denis Matatiken, the Principal Secretary for Environment, noted the unusual presence of these invasive birds and indicated the need for urgent action. He ex-

plained that while a few crows had been observed since last year, the population has rapidly multiplied, posing a significant challenge.

PS Matatiken further elaborated that although crows were previously spotted in Victoria and Grand Anse, their concentration has notably shifted towards Perseverance in recent months. This shift, he suggested, could be

attributed to the availability of suitable nesting sites in terrestrial environments within the district.

Addressing the entry of these species into the country, Mr. Matatiken speculated on potential factors such as transportation via ships or the presence of abundant food sources on the island. He emphasised the importance of understanding these dynamics to effectively manage the crow population.

The Director of the Biodiversity Conservation Section, Ms. Ashley Dyer, outlined the Ministry's proactive approach to addressing the issue. She underscored the ongoing monitoring, control, and eradication efforts, which are primarily focused on Perseverance due to the concentration of sightings. Collaborating with the Response Unit of the Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF), they conduct operations during strategic times to observe crow behaviours and implement targeted measures.



• The crows could have been introduced via visiting ships

Despite past irregular efforts, recent years have seen an escalation in crow sightings, prompting the Ministry to intensify eradication programs. Ms. Dyer acknowledged challenges such as limited resources and manpower

but affirmed their commitment to maximizing efforts to mitigate the crow population's impact.

In 2021, sightings peaked, with the Ministry managing to reduce numbers through targeted interventions. However, Ms. Dyer

highlighted the persistent threat posed by crows, including disease transmission and competition with native bird species. While various methods have been employed, including trapping and netting, shooting has proven to be the most effective strategy.

Apart from Perseverance, sightings have been reported in neighbouring areas such as Roche Caiman and Glacis, necessitating a coordinated response. Ms. Dyer emphasised the need for adaptive strategies given the intelligence of crows and announced incentives, including a bounty of SCR 500, bringing the bird dead or alive to encourage community participation in controlling the population.

Overall, efforts are underway to address the growing crow population in the Perseverance District. With continued vigilance and community engagement, authorities aim to mitigate the environmental and economic impacts of this invasive species.



• Crows spotted in the Perseverance District