We finally found it!

By Amanda Port-Louis

After 8 years doing research in the Silhouette National Park, the Island Conservation Society team finally managed to catch and photograph the rare Seychelles palm frog (*Sechellophryne pipilodryas*). This species, endemic to Silhouette Island, was first described by J. Gerlach in 2002. However, the diagnostic morphologic characters of the species are still poorly known and until know, only one picture of the species was available for comparison. The new pictures taken will surely help to better describe this highly cryptic species!

This discovery was made possible thanks to a new monitoring program focusing on Seychelles amphibians carried out in collaboration with Dr. Jim Labisko that started in 2017. The project, titled "Developing a conservation strategy for sooglossid frogs: assessment, monitoring, and building capacity to mainstream long-term action" aims to establish a long term multi-island population monitoring programme for sooglossid frogs, document the extent of occurrence of multi-distributed sooglossid frogs, as well as identify environmental and climate influencing factors on seasonal range shifts.

The Seychelles palm frog is one of the four species of the Sooglossid family found in Seychelles. Measuring only ~1 cm in length and of brownish/reddish color, it camouflages perfectly in the leaf litter, making it extremely difficult to find. It lives only on Silhouette Island in forests from 200m alt. onwards and according to ICS observation, *Se. pipilodryas* seems to prefer areas with big boulders and dead logs.

Unfortunately, *Se. pililodryas* is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red list of Threatened Species, due to its very limited distribution and the threats it's facing. Indeed, climate change, invasive species and diseases are all threatening the survival of the species. In order to limit these threatening factors, ICS started to monitor them using advanced technology. Bioacoustic detectors have been set up in the Silhouette National Park to better understand their distribution and abundance. Disease screenings are also organized on a yearly basis to highlight the presence/absence of the deadly Chytrid fungus and visual transects are carried out by the ICS staff.

Caption to add to one of the picture: "Picture of *Sechellophryne pipilodryas*, with its typical arrow on its back and a third pointy toe."