



# 10 years of Seychelles black parrot breeding monitoring: what we now know

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seychelles islands foundation **vallée de mar**

# Biogeography / history of the black parrot

- Endemic to the Seychelles
  - Only breed on Praslin
  - Recorded visitor to Curieuse
- Only remaining parrot species left in Seychelles
- Previously considered a subspecies of lesser vasa parrot

- Only declared distinct species in 2014 due to genetic research supported by SIF
- Current population estimates: 1096 – 1742 birds



# Project aims in 2009

- Basic ecology
- Breeding behaviours
- Reproductive constraints
- Breeding activity and movements through ringing and re-sighting



# The challenge

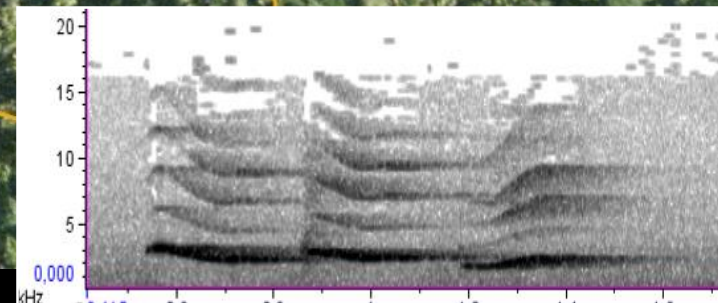
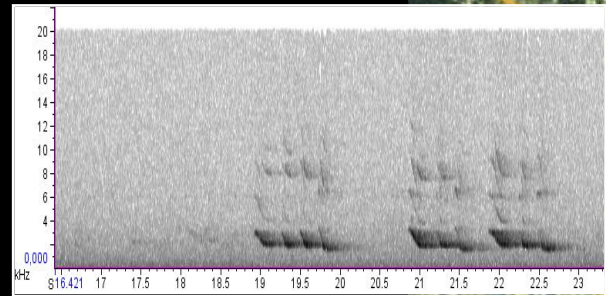
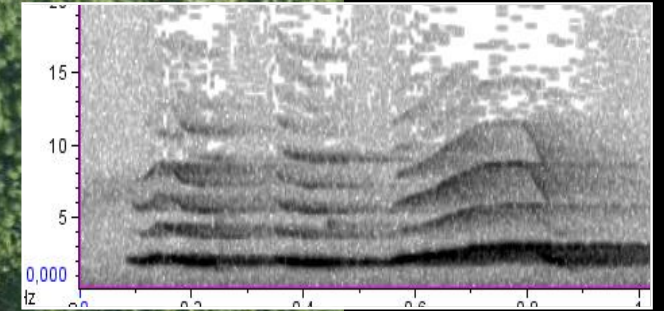
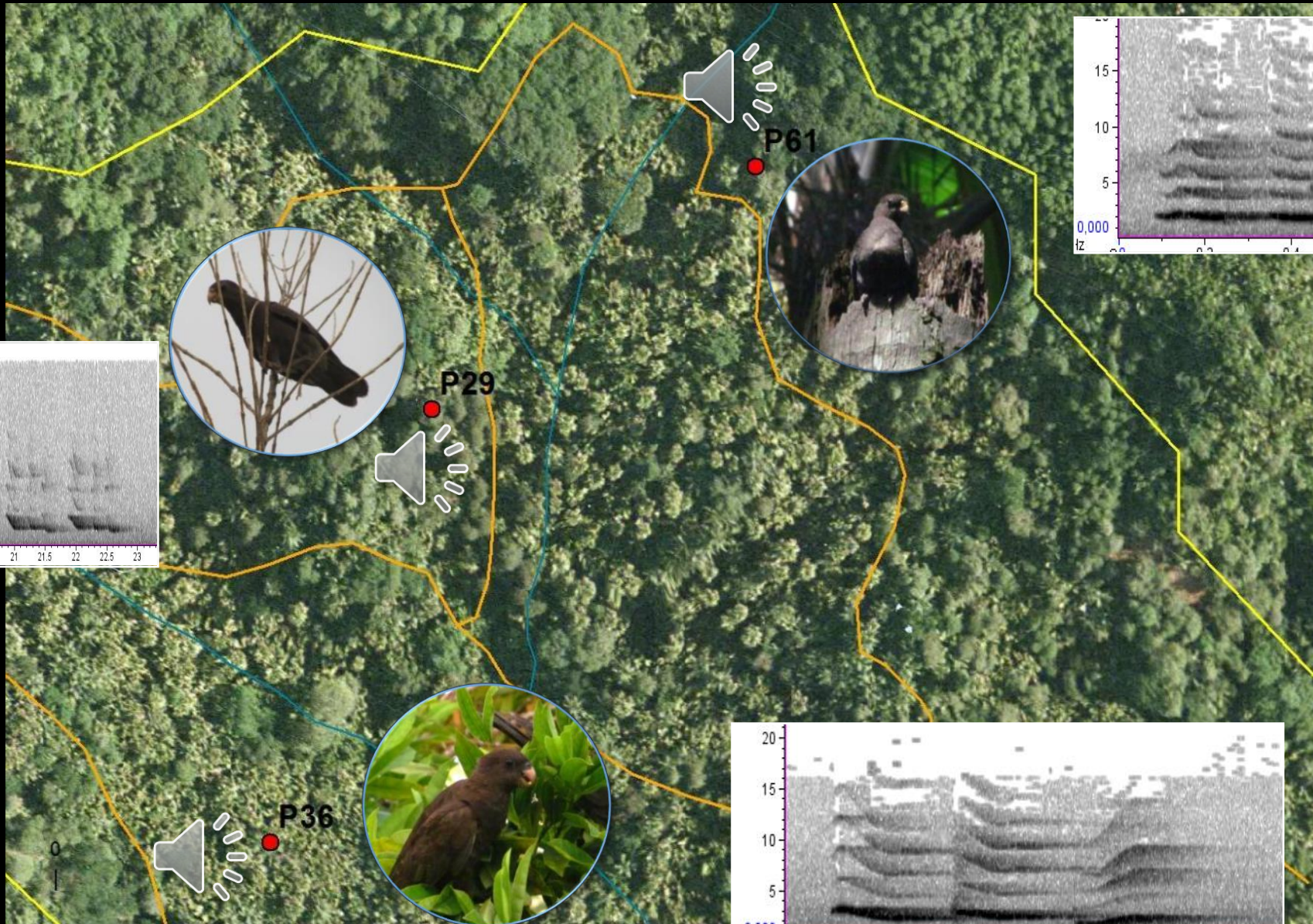
- Hard to study
- Difficult to observe – can't see through coco de mer leaves
- Often nest in dead trees – can't climb
- Different methods required
  - Baby monitor
  - Free standing ladders
- Time-consuming



# Major findings so far

- Each breeding female has a unique call
- Yearly fluctuations in breeding activity
- Cavity selection:
  - Predominantly in coco de mer (15/19 this year) although this could be biased
  - Entrance should be sheltered
  - Diameter of tree – 25cm
  - Size of hole
  - Single entrance
  - Depth

# Black parrots - Vocalisations

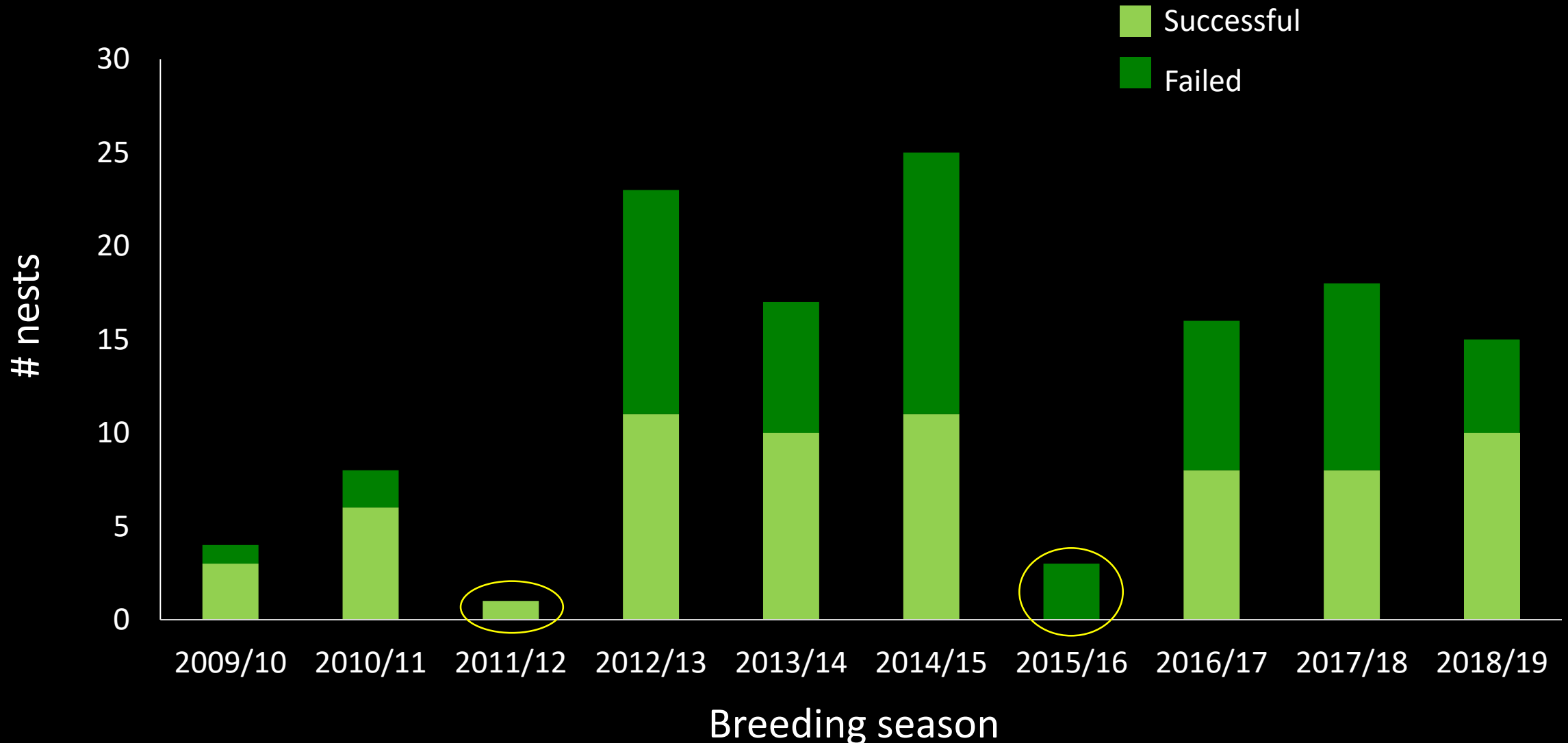


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# Black parrots – Breeding activity & nest success

Breeding activity and success 2009-2019





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- Parrots haven't read the guide book on choosing a house!

# Black parrots – Breeding monitoring 2009-2019

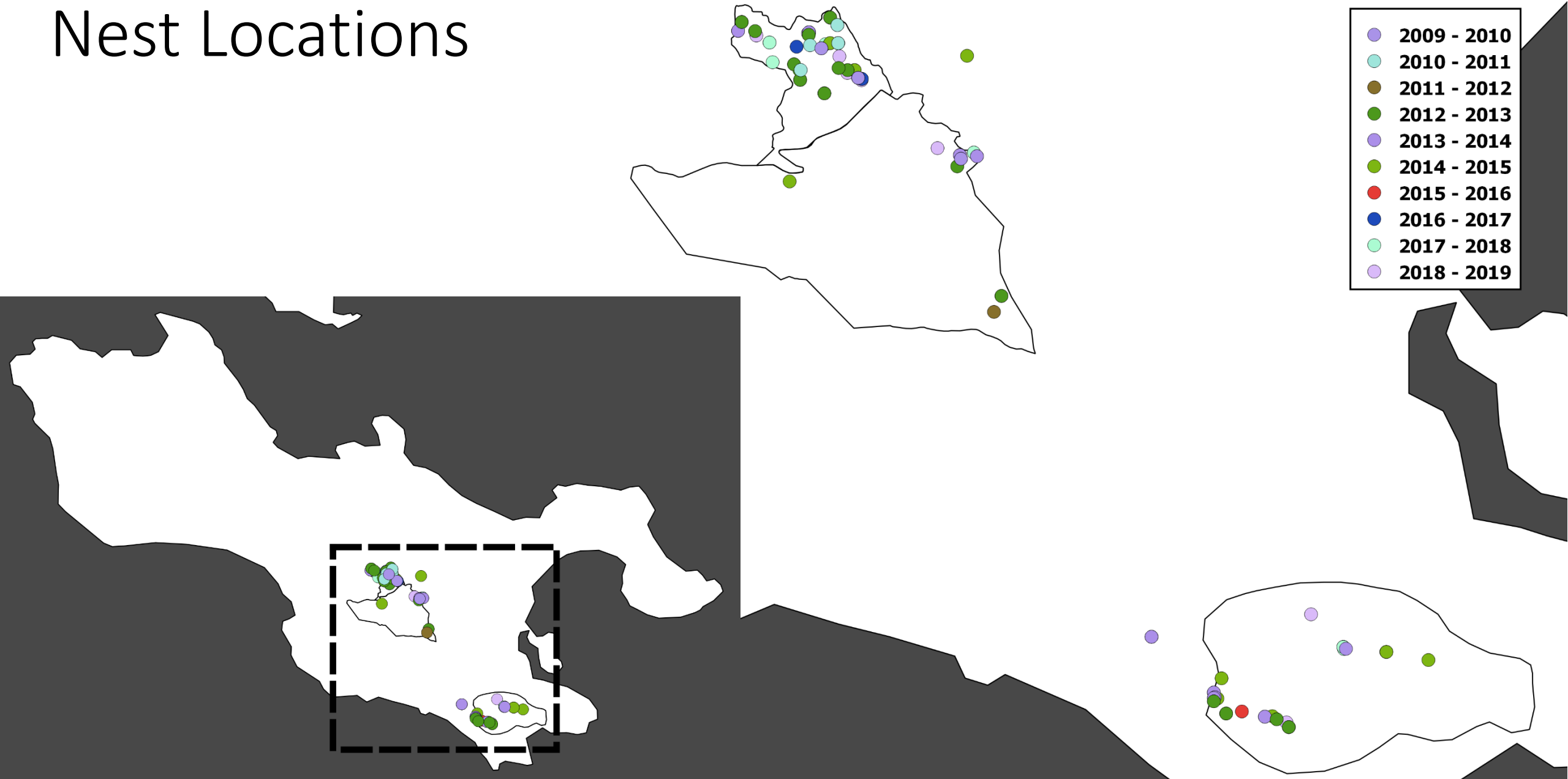
## In numbers...

- VdM, Fond Peper, Glacis Noire, Fond Ferdinand
- 133 nest monitored
- 68 nests successful (51%)
- 93 fledglings
- 260 BPs ringed
- 90 chicks, 170 adults

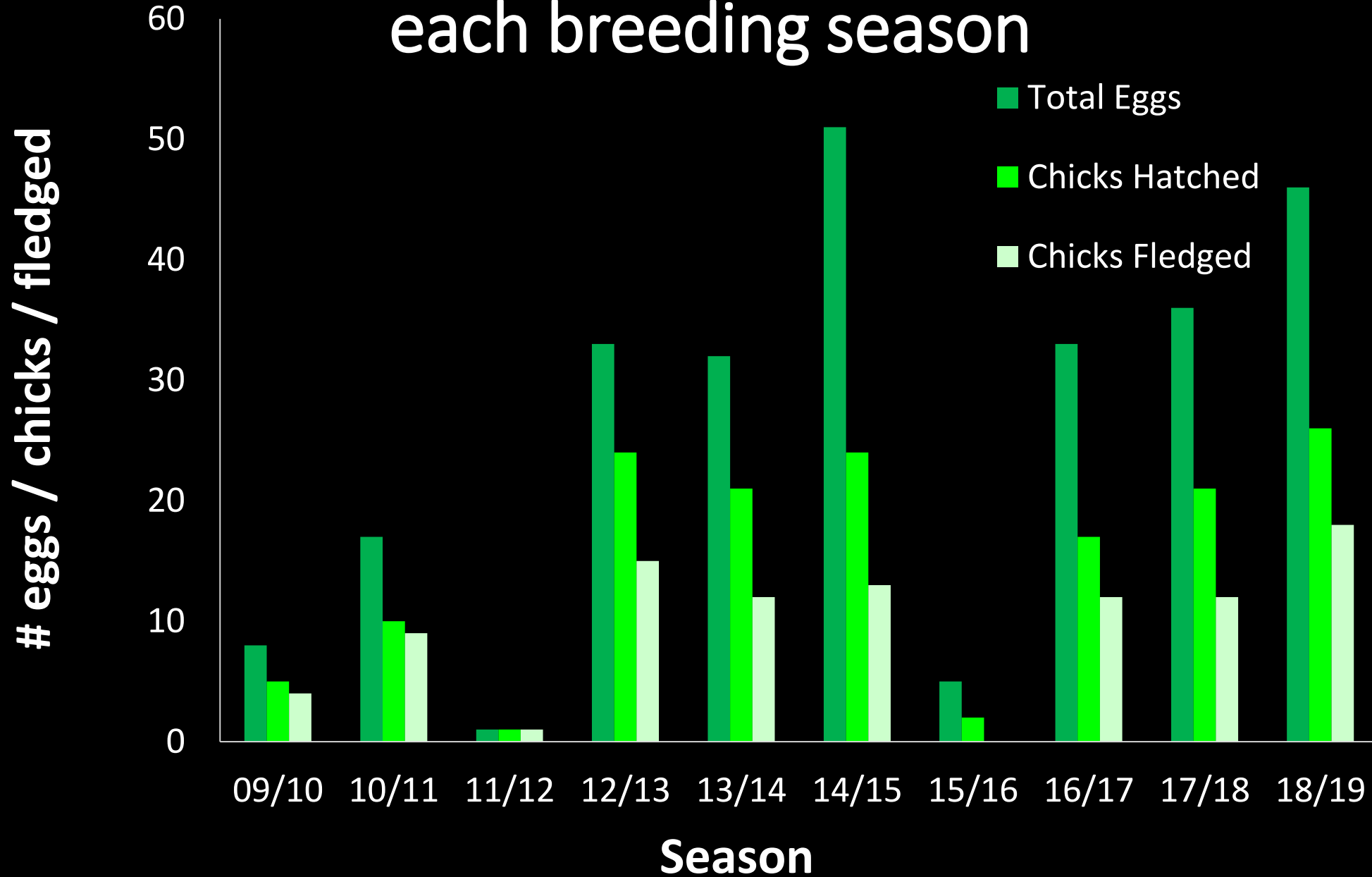


# Black parrots – Breeding monitoring 2009-2019

## Nest Locations



# Numbers of eggs, chicks and fledglings monitored in each breeding season



# Breeding success

- Influencing factors:
  - Predation – of eggs and chick
  - Yellow crazy ants
  - Climatic conditions / weather
  - Food availability
  - Disease
  - Genetics



# Current – rat impacts on breeding success

- Rats can climb trees
- Rats predate eggs/chicks
- Rats are a problem...
- But are they the problem?
- An experiment was designed to test this, and has been run for the last 2 seasons



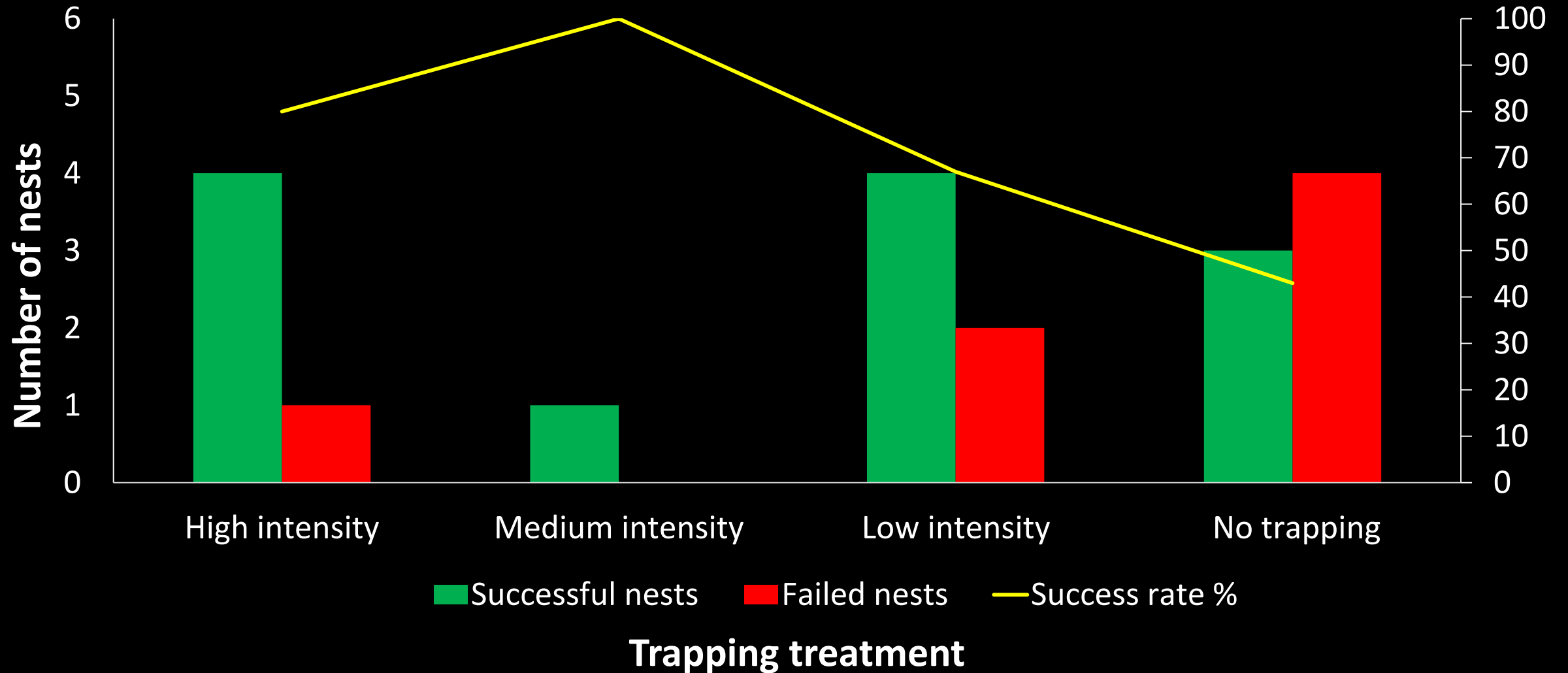
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# Rat control experiment

- Quantify impact of rats
- Treatment: 3 intensities of trapping
- Control: no trapping
- Early results suggest rats as major cause of nest failure
- But not conclusive
- Conclusion: Rats are a big problem but probably not the only problem



# Nest success during rat trapping trial





# Black parrots – What next?

## Black parrot population - stable but vulnerable

1. **Understand rat impacts** – assess rat control experiment, continue trial?
2. **Understand causes of fluctuating breeding activity** – phenology review, continue breeding monitoring
3. **Improve conservation status of BPs** – reduce threats at VdM, e.g. YCA control, support translocations to suitable islands
4. **Understand black parrot breeding ecology** – more research into cooperative breeding, genetics, post-fledging survival
5. **Publication of 10 years of data**





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Thanks to everyone who has contributed to the Black Parrot project over the last 10 years

