

Project Update: June 2016

Between October and November 2015 we conducted a pilot study, during which we collected 744 birds of 15 species, all endemic. Six species were confirmed as seed dispersers, *Speirops lugubris* being clearly dominant. We confirmed 43 dispersed plant species, including exotics, such as *Rubus rosifolius* and *Cestrum laevigatum*, found both in native and secondary forest. These data are being analysed for Ana Coelho's MSc thesis and will be presented in a talk at the International Conference on Island Evolution, Ecology and Conservation (July 2016 – Azores, Portugal).

The first main field season took place in April 2016, during which we sampled four plots in native forest and four in secondary forest. We collected 459 birds of 13 species, all endemic except for one *Estrilda astrild*. These samples are still being processed.

We have also characterised the adult and regenerating vegetation, surveyed fruit availability and collected over 150 samples for the seed reference collection.

We have been training four field assistants in bird ringing and seed identification, and our work was filmed for a Santomean documentary being produced for Portuguese-speaking countries.

Next field season will take place in June-July 2016 and will be covered by CNN's Inside Africa.



Left: The endemic São Tomé speirops *Speirops lugubris* has been identified as a key seed disperser. Right: The sarcochore fruits of "Bugi-bugi" *Erythrococca molleri*, a São Tomé endemic."